



## PREVENTING NEEDLESTICK INJURIES

### WHAT IS THE PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE?

- In the United States, 384,000 needlestick and other sharps injuries occur each year among hospital-based healthcare workers.
- Needlestick injuries carry the risk of exposure to infectious bloodborne diseases (e.g., HIV, hepatitis B virus, and hepatitis C virus). Even when a serious infection is not transmitted, the emotional impact of a needlestick injury can be severe and long-lasting.
- A substantial proportion of needlestick and other sharps injuries could be prevented by incorporating safer medical practices and programs in the workforce.
- Recent federal and state legislation mandates the use of safer medical devices.

### WHAT HAS CDC ACCOMPLISHED?

CDC is responsible for conducting research and making recommendations for the prevention of work-related illness and injury. For needlestick and other sharps injuries, this is accomplished through a comprehensive research agenda including surveillance of blood exposures, developing recommendations for exposure management, disseminating strategies for reducing these exposures through the use of engineering and administrative controls, and conducting various training and education programs. CDC has undertaken research and distributed scientific information and recommendations to help prevent needlestick injuries among healthcare and public safety workers and has funded research to estimate the risk of exposure to blood for correctional healthcare workers, operating room personnel, and healthcare workers employed in non-hospital settings.

#### *Example of Program in Action*

CDC developed a website that contains information on needlestick prevention. In addition, CDC has partnered with hospitals, home healthcare agencies, nursing homes, and dental offices to work through the process of identifying, selecting, evaluating, and implementing safer medical devices. These healthcare facilities share their lessons learned on a website that is visited by more than 1,500 visitors each month.

### WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

CDC will continue to monitor needlestick injuries and other blood exposures among healthcare workers and provide information on the management of occupational exposures, including updating recommendations for post-exposure prophylaxis. In addition, CDC is investigating the risks of blood exposure among healthcare workers, including those who work in home settings. CDC also is investigating the risks of blood exposure among community workers such as body piercers, tattoo artists, waste handlers, and police officers.

*For additional information on this or other CDC programs, visit [www.cdc.gov/program](http://www.cdc.gov/program)*

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